

# PPD's News to Live By

ES&H Newsletter  
December 2011

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## Winter Driving Tips

Everyone should understand that winter driving in the Midwest can be risky. Please take the time to ensure you are prepared.

AAA offers winter driving tips [here](#), and our neighbors to the north are providing winter driving tips to their citizens. This advice can help improve our road safety as well. Take a look at some of the safety tips provided by [Transport Canada](#):

- Install matching winter tires on all wheels of your vehicle. Winter tires outperform all-season tires when the temperature falls below 7°C, whether the roads are dry or covered in snow and/or ice.
- Pack a winter driving emergency kit in your vehicle.
- Check tire pressure at least once a month.
- Have your battery, ignition system, lights and brakes tested.
- Ensure your wipers are in good working condition.
- Clear the snow and ice off your vehicle.
- Give yourself extra distance to stop, as roads may be icy.
- Check weather conditions before hitting the roads.
- Dress properly — wear warm clothing.
- Bring a cell phone for emergency purposes, but never use it while driving.



Check out the road conditions on the routes you will be traveling. You can find them at the following websites:

- [Getting Around Illinois](#)
- [Indiana Travel Conditions](#)
- [Michigan Winter Travel Advisory](#)
- [Wisconsin Winter Road Conditions](#)
- [Iowa Traveler Information](#)
- [Road reports across the U.S.](#)

If you do become stuck while traveling in a vehicle, the [National Weather Service](#) offers the following tips:

Stay in the vehicle:

- You will become quickly disoriented in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Make yourself visible to rescuers:

- Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine.
- Tie a colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door.
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

Exercise:

- From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes vigorously to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

## Slip and Fall Incident



An incident last month that caused a person to lose consciousness is another reminder to watch for slippery surfaces in our work spaces.

An employee was working in the bed of a pickup truck first thing in the morning. The bed was lined with a sheet of plywood (that at one time had a non-slip coating, but it had worn off), and there was some water (possibly frost) on the plywood. The employee slipped and fell while loading parts into the truck,, hitting his head, which caused him to lose consciousness.

Always take a moment to review the work area for hazards, and take a few more seconds to determine how you will remove or avoid the hazards.

## Multiple Injuries After Worker Falls from a Scissor Lift

Brookhaven National Lab recently had a subcontractor fall approximately 16 feet from a scissor lift. The worker was torch cutting a 3-inch thick biological shield wall, and leaned against the hinged guardrail of the lift. The guardrail folded outward, allowing the worker to fall. The worker was hospitalized with multiple fractures.

Following the initial investigation, it appears that the locking pins for the hinged guardrail system had not been positioned per the manufacturer's specifications.

Scissor lifts are regulated under OSHA's [Scaffolding standard](#), which states if a scissor lift has a properly designed and maintained guardrail, fall protection is not *required*; however, a restraint device would be best practice to ensure workers do not leave the basket. Inspect all equipment (including scissor and aerial lifts) before use to ensure it is in safe working condition; if not in safe working condition, tag it out and request service.

To read more about OSHA's stance on scissor lift fall protection, check out [this standard interpretation letter](#). You can find additional safety information within [OSHA's Hazard Alert](#) that was issued after a University of Notre Dame student worker died from injuries sustained in a scissor lift tip over incident.

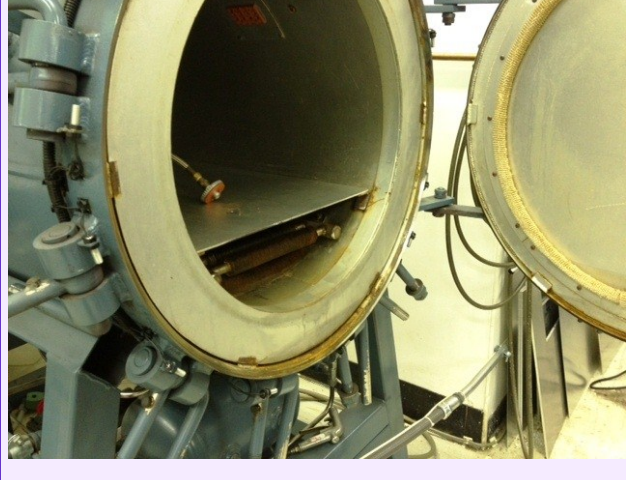


## A Do-It-Yourself Don't!

Check out [this video](#) of some home electrical "improvement."

Thanks to Wayne Shaddix for submitting this video!

## Possible Electrical Hazard Remediated



Thanks to Dave Butler for recognizing a potential electrical hazard, taking the proper steps of locking/tagging the equipment out and reporting the issue to his supervisor and ES&H; and determining a safe work practice to prevent the hazard from reoccurring.

After using an autoclave, Dave noticed water in the oven, which has some 480V electrical components. He immediately lockout/tagged out the equipment and contacted his supervisor.

To determine the source of the water, Dave tested various possibilities, and believes the water is coming from the in-house air line. To prevent further instances of water in the autoclave near the 480V bus, he will use argon gas rather than the compressed air.

## Electrical Safety Suggestion—from Dave Pushka

After reading last month's article about melted electrical plugs, Dave Pushka submitted the suggestion that PPD start utilizing thermal imaging equipment to locate areas of increased heat in our electronics crates, and make this an annual inspection item.

The suggestion has been forwarded to PPD's electrical safety coordinator who is determining the best way to implement this.

The Electrical Safety Subcommittee will also be reviewing the suggestion for lab-wide use. Thanks Dave!

## What? Approximately 20% of Americans Suffer From Some Hearing Loss

A study published in November, conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins, estimates hearing loss on a national level at approximately 20% (1 in 5 Americans). This new study analyzed data from across the nation, rather than focusing on specific areas or populations, providing a broader view of this issue.

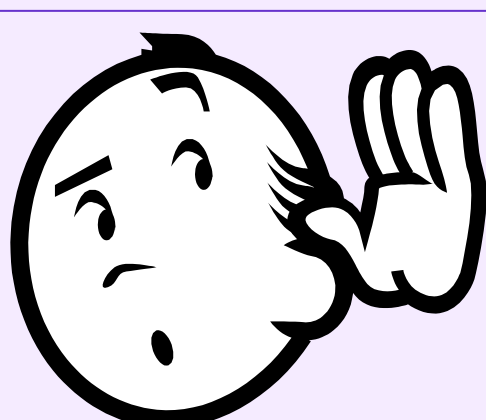
The researchers used the World Health Organization's definition for hearing loss, which is not being able to hear sounds of 25 decibels or less in the speech frequencies. Based on their data, 48 million Americans have hearing loss in at least one ear, and 30 million have hearing loss in both ears.

This study also shows that women and African Americans are significantly less likely to have hearing loss. They have not determined exactly why, but theorize it could have to do with the female hormone estrogen, and the melanin pigment in darker skin could have protective effects on the inner ear.

Often people dismiss hearing loss as just a typical part of getting older, so they treat it as trivial. While some hearing loss is inevitable, it is not something you should ignore. It can have a very negative effect on your communication with others. Take precautions to protect your hearing at work and outside of work (e.g. maintain mp3 player volume at lower levels, wear hearing protection when using loud machinery, etc.).

Additional information about the study can be found in the following articles:

- EHS Today: [Study Shows Hearing Loss on a Grand Scale in U.S. Population](#)
- ABC News: [One in Five Americans Have Hearing Loss](#)
- American Medical News: [Hearing Loss More Prevalent Than Thought](#)



## New OSHA Construction Safety Videos

OSHA has published new construction safety videos in their efforts to reduce the number of construction deaths and injuries. Topics include falls, sprains and strains, struck-by accidents, carbon monoxide and excavation safety.

You can watch the videos [here](#).

*Task Managers and Construction Coordinators can view the videos for continuing education credits.*



## The "Doh!" Photos of the Month



## PPD November Injuries

No injuries reported!



## November Winner!!!



Tanja Waltrip

**Question:** What are the requirements for respirator use?

**Correct Response:** Respirator use requires medical approval, training and proper fit-testing for the type of respirator (s) you will be using, before you begin the work.

## December Contest

For a chance to win a PPD ES&H acrylic cup w/ straw, please answer the following correctly:

**What is the World Health Organization's definition for hearing loss?**



Please submit your responses/answers to [Angela Sands](#) by December 28<sup>th</sup>.  
(If there are multiple correct answers/entries, a drawing is held.)

Did you find this newsletter helpful? Does it have the kind of information you are looking for? Your feedback is important. Please continue to use the [electronic safety concern database](#), the suggestion boxes in your area, or send comments to Angela Sands, [asands@fnal.gov](#)